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CHARACTERISTICS, ATTITUDES, AND PERCEPTIONS

OF

EMPLOYED INDUSTRIAL HOMEWORKERS

A MONOGRAPH OF THE

PROGRAMMATIC RESEARCH PROJECT

ON THE

REHABILITATION OF HOMEBOUND PERSONS

BY

HERBERT RUSALEM, Ed.D.

This Project was sponsored by Federation of the Handicapped, 211 West 14 Street, New York, New York 10011, with the assistance of a Grant from the Social and Rehabilitation Service, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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Thanks for invaluable assistance in this Study is due to Milton Cohen, Executive Director, Federation of the Handicapped and Chuck Houston, Research Assistant.

This Report is based on a Study conducted under the Programmatic Research Project on the Rehabilitation of Homebound Persons supported by The Social and Rehabilitation Service.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction

I. The Problem..... 1

II. The Design..... 6

III. Demographic Variables..... 7

IV. Activity Variables..... 14

V. The Industrial Homework Experience.. 15

VI. Incomplete Sentences..... 17

VII. The Q Sort..... 20

VIII. Discussion..... 21

IX. Conclusions..... 30

X. References..... 34

INTRODUCTION

MILTON COHEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
FEDERATION OF THE HANDICAPPED

Thousands of Americans earn all or part of their livelihoods by working at home. As an almost invisible segment of the American labor force, their contributions to the nation's productive effort is almost universally ignored. Yet, the goods that they produce and the services that they offer constitute a substantial economic force both in terms of productive units and dollar earnings. Despite this, homeworkers constitute an almost unknown group in the working population. Virtually no information currently is available concerning their characteristics, attitudes, and perceptions.

Since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 give special consideration to the severely handicapped, including the homebound, it is imperative for rehabilitation workers to become more familiar with the homework experience. What is the working life-style of homebound workers; how do they manage problems relating to their work at home; how do they use their non-working time; and what is the impact of their work experiences upon them and their families? In essence, what are the attributes of the homework millieu and how are these related to rehabilitation programming decisions for homebound clients?

The reader will note that homeworkers are characterized by broad individual differences in virtually every variable. This is, perhaps, the most essential aspect of the homework condition for rehabilitation helpers to remember. The findings of this Study confirm earlier conclusions that stereotyping is as incongruent for homeworkers as for any other rehabilitation caseload. Thus, the rehabilitation solutions developed for one homebound client may be unsuitable for another since each case varies from all others in highly significant ways. Indeed, industrial, clerical, or craft homework may be quite inappropriate for many homebound individuals and other solutions have to be sought for their vocational problems. The critical variable in every case is the homebound person himself and the unique environment in which he functions. Skilled rehabilitation personnel will not need to be reminded that the nub of all rehabilitation service is individual diagnosis and treatment and that the homebound are no exception to this rule.

An example of this is the meaning of the homework experience to the homebound client. Our Project staff would have like to have found that homework became the focus of the lives of all those who undertook it. Although this was true for a substantial proportion of the subjects in this Study, some clients could take it or leave it alone. For some, a work layoff constitute a disaster; for others, it constituted merely a hiatus, and, in some cases, a welcome one at that.

Although we would like agencies to start homebound rehabilitation programming somewhere, perhaps with just one or two employment possibilities, Herb Rusalem and I are aware of what lies at the end of the tunnel. Differences among homebound persons are so

evident that no single service or program will meet the needs of all or most of them. If this Study says anything to the Field, it is that a mature homebound rehabilitation program should be replete with employment options. Just as any group of clients should not be locked into a small occupational vise, so the homebound should have multiple choices and the homebound should have multiple choices and diversified opportunities. In some instances, owing to sparse resources, limited professional ingenuity, or token programming, homebound persons actually are offered only one or two employment alternatives. When this happens the best that can be said is that these limited employment opportunities in industrial homework or crafts are better than nothing.

As indicated in the findings of this Study, Industrial Homework plays an important role in the lives of some homebound persons. But, that is no argument for wedging the homebound into such work unselectively. The task of the future is to develop in every community a repertoire of homework opportunities that will be congruent with the interests, capacities, and preferences of a wide gamut of homebound clients.

CHARACTERISTICS, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYED INDUSTRIAL HOMEWORKERS

HERBERT RUSALEM

1. THE PROBLEM

The more than two million Americans who are homebound constitute one of the largest potential rehabilitation caseloads in this country. As a group, homebound persons vary from each other in virtually every demographic, social, psychological, medical and vocational dimension, having in common only one central attribute--physical, intellectual, emotionally, and/or social disabilities that are so limiting that the individual concerned cannot regularly leave his residence with the aid of the transportation normally available to him to participate in community, educational, rehabilitation employment, social, or citizenship activities. Only in the past few years have investigators begun to describe selected sub-categories of the homebound population such as the blind homebound, the aged homebound, the teen-age homebound, and the disengaged, unaffiliated and alientated inner city homebound.

Professional and lay persons tend to perceive the homebound as dependent individuals who must rely upon family largess, public welfare, or private philanthropy for their financial and social sustenance. Although this currently is true of the large majority of homebound individuals in the United States this does not have to be so. Indeed, through rehabilitation, a growing proportion of the homebound population is attaining an employed and/or socially self-directing status. Such employment may be in crafts, clerical or industrial homework, business, self-employment or participation in certain service fields.

Most notably, however, homebound persons are being placed in increasing numbers in industrial homework, a form of employment that occurs on the site of a severely disabled person's home where he works upon tasks that generally are provided to him for production on a piece work basis by State and local rehabilitation agencies. For their part, these agencies usually obtain the industrial homework tasks on a subcontract basis from competitive industry. In a sense, industrial homework can be compared to a sheltered workshop enterprise in which the workshop site is the homebound individual's residence, a site on which there is only one worker--the homebound person. Typically, space is set aside in the home where materials may be stored and work may be performed. Needed supervision and training are provided by the rehabilitation agency.

Industrial homework tasks usually have the following characteristics:

1 The work typically consists of hand assembly packaging, or fabrication operations.

2. The raw materials and the finished items generally are small and easy to store.

3. The work operations tend to be simple ones that require modest skills levels and little training.

4. The time demands for meeting employer deadlines often are not excessively rigid because strict time lines are not practical for many homeworkers.

5. The work usually is performed under environmental standards specified by Federal, State and local homework and wages and hours regulations.

6. Remuneration generally is modest. Few industrial homeworkers become fully self-supporting or earn the full-time equivalent of a statutory minimum wage.

7. There are few, if any, opportunities for the homebound person to advance up a homework career ladder.

8 Most industrial homework tasks are repetitive and recurrent and, from an external observer's viewpoint, can become rather tiresome and boring over a period of time.

Despite the negative aspects of industrial homework noted above, it is becoming a major source of employment for homebound persons because it constitutes one of the few vocational options available to this group. Indeed, in the absence of a variety of other employment possibilities for the homebound, there is a need for developing additional industrial homework opportunities in all corners of the United States for the tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of currently idle homebound persons who might benefit substantially from participation in a homework experience. At this time, however, only a small fraction of the potential homework population is being served by organized industrial homework programs in local communities.

Since selective factors in industrial homework differentiate its participants from other homebound subgroups, it is important to understand both the characteristics of industrial homeworkers and the way in which they perceive the world. In effect, it is hypothesized that the unique conditions under which they function and the selective personal factors which bring them into industrial homework make these homebound persons somewhat distinctive from others in a general homebound caseload.

A fundamental source of difference lies in the fact that not every homebound person qualifies for participation in an industrial homework program. Although qualifications for entry differ from community to community, there are sufficient commonalities in the screens used to set the industrial homeworker group apart from other homebound persons. Among these differentiating qualifications are:

1. Industrial homeworkers generally are vocationally motivated. They tend to be people who hunger for employment of some type and who derive gratification from remunerative work.

2. Industrial homeworkers tend to be in financial need. The additional income derived from homework, no matter how modest it may be, means a great deal to them economically and socially.

3. Industrial homeworkers arerequired to meet some specified minimum standard of manual dexterity and coordination. This is so because the jobs they perform in their homes almost always require some manual skill. In certain programs, virtually unimpaired bi-manual functioning is required; in others lesser degrees of manual capacity are acceptable for selected work tasks.

4. As a group, industrial homeworkers maintain somewhat stronger ties to the community than other homebound persons by reason of their continuing contacts with employer and/or mediating community agencies.

5. Industrial homeworkers tend to have good frustration tolerance. Such tolerance is needed to cope with the continuing problems encountered in the homework experience, including an unevenflow of work, low earnings, routine tasks, inadequate

supervision and instruction, delivery delays, family attitudes toward the work, and ,sometimes, insensitive employers or agency personnel.

Relatively little is known at present about most homebound subgroups, and this certainly is true about industrial homebound workers. Until recently, their number was so small that it was difficult to obtain a suitable sample for study and so few were employed in this field that there was little interest in understanding them more fully. As the number of industrial homeworkers grows, this attitude is changing. It is now apparent that most rehabilitation workers will be asked in the course of their careers to make professional decisions about homebound persons and their relation to industrial homework. Only by knowing the "style of life" of the industrial homeworker, the way in which the homework situation helps to shape client attitudes and perceptions, and the long-range expectations of homeworkers can the rehabilitation worker understand the psychosocial implications of industrial homework and guide his client accordingly. Since the success of an industrial homework rehabilitation plan for a seriously disabled person often depends upon the compatibility between the homework experience and the characteristics and life-space of the homebound individual, it is important to comprehend these variables as fully as possible. This Study was undertaken to explore the industrial homework experience of one sample (hopefully, a reasonably representative one) of industrial homeworkers so that rehabilitation personnel can have a frame of reference for their vocational planning with selected homebound individuals. At this point, it should be noted that there is currently no way of determining precisely the degree of representativeness of the client sample of this Study. In the context of daily

rehabilitation service to urban homebound persons, the members of this group do seem comparable to homeworkers in other cities. However, future survey research will have to determine the degree to which this is true. Consequently, until this is established, caution is urged in transferring the findings presented below unselectively to all homeworkers.

II. THE DESIGN

The Study sample consisted of 35 industrial homeworkers who had been rehabilitated jointly by Federation of the Handicapped and the New York State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation or the New York State Commission for the Visually Handicapped. At the time of study, all of these rehabilitants were performing homework tasks on subcontracts obtained and managed by Federation of the Handicapped. The sample was drawn from a roster of more than 200 industrial homeworkers currently active with Federation. The sample members were selected because they had the following attributes:

1. They had been industrial homeworkers for more than one but less than three years.

2. They had been employed on industrial homework consistently during this period.

3. They were considered to be successful industrial homeworkers in terms of quantity and quality of output.

4. They were accessible to interview and were capable of responding to the Project instruments.

Each of the members of the sample was interviewed at his place of residence one or more times by a Project Research worker. During these interviews (supplemented by data obtained from Agency case records for validating and enriching purposes) the following instruments were administered:

1. A demographic questionnaire.

2. An analysis of activities form.

3. An incomplete sentences schedule developed expressly for the Study.

4. A Q sort in which respondents were asked to sort self-descriptions in accordance with how closely each reflected the way in which they see themselves.

Supportive data were obtained from interviews conducted with the Homebound Employment Staff of Federation of the Handicapped and rehabilitation counselors assigned to these cases by the New York State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. The data were ordered and analyzed by the Project staff and the findings were reviewed by homebound service personnel at Federation of the Handicapped.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

A. Sex Distribution

20 (57.2%) of the members of the sample were females.

B. Age Distribution

The age range in the sample was 40-77 years.

The mean age was 57.4 years. 51.5% were

60 years of age or over; 77.1% were 50 years of age or over.

C. Place of Birth

65.7% were born in the Continental United States;17.2% in Europe; 17.2% in Puerto Rico, Honduras, and the West Indies.

D. Social Group

White 62.9% (Hispanic 14.3%; Other 48.6%)
Black 37.2%

E. Marital Status

51.4% married, living with spouse.
22.8% widowed
14.3% divorced
5.7% separated
5.7% single.

F. Borough of Residence in New York City

31.5% Manhattan
28.6% Bronx
22.8% Brooklyn
17.2% Queens

G. Family Unit

51.4% living with spouse (in 7 of these families, children were also residing in the household)
22.8% living alone
14.3% living with family member other than spouse
5.7% living with full-time housekeeper
2.9% living in long-term illness hospital
2.9% living with parents

H. Assistance in the Home

62.5% were making regular use of homemaking, visiting nurse, hospital home care, or similar assistive services.

I. Income

The average monthly income for these 35 homebound persons from all sources except industrial homework earnings was $320.

The range was from less that $100. to more than $750. a month. Individual income was made up of combinations of the following components:

24 of these homebound persons received an average of $195. a month from family members and friends.

8 (22.8%) received public assistance at an average level of $125. a month.

22 (62.9%) received Social Security Disability benefits averaging $211. a month.

6 received Old Age and Survivors benefits averaging $120. a month.

2 received a Veterans Administration pension and I received a Union pension.

J. Expenses

The average monthly expenses of these 35 homebound persons balances the $320 average monthly income of the group. These expenses were made up of the following average monthly components:

Rent or Mortgage	$143.
Gas and Electricity	16.
Telephone	11.
Food	120.
Medical and Pharmaceutical Costs	18.
Other Expenses	12.
TOTAL EXPENSES PER MONTH	$320.

K. Type of Residence

82.8% lived in their own apartments
11.4% lived in their own homes.
2.9% were boarders.
2.9% lived in an institution.

L. Architectural Barriers

6 (17.1%) lived on an upper floor with no access to an elevator.

2 (5.7%) lived in apartments in which the doorways were too narrow to permit easy egress.

M. Special Equipment

9 (25.7%) had railings in their bathrooms
4 (11.4%) had seats in their showers.
1 each (2.9%) had special oxygen supplies, handbars, a respirator, trapeze over the bed, a raised toilet seat, and full hospital facilities The latter applied to the individual who was a resident in a long-term illness hospital.

N. Home Amenities

35 (100.0%) tub and shower
33 (94.4%) telephone
33 (94.4%) television set
33 (94.4%) radio
21 (60.0%) hi-fi phonograph

O. Educational Level

The mean educational level of the group was 10.3 years.

29(82.8%) had had some post-secondary school training, including study in such fields as nursing, beauty culture, mechanical work, business, sewing, and college attendance.

P. Work History

All 35 members of this sample had had a remunerative work experience prior to becoming homebound.

32 (91.5%) had worked full-time.

3 (8.5%) had worked part-time.

The major occupational history distribution for the group was:

16 (45.6%) manual work
10 (28.6%) service work
5 (14.3%) self-employment
2 (5.7%) sales
2 (5.7%) sheltered employment

The mean number of years of unemployment as a homebound person prior to entering industrial homework was 6.7 years.

The mean last salary prior to entry into industrial homework was $5,100. a year.

20 respondents indicated the degree of their satisfaction with the last job preceding their entry into industrial homework.

9 (45.0%) highly satisfied
10 (50.0%) moderately satisfied - and
1 (5.0%) not satisfied

Q. Primary Disabilities

17 (48.5%) Neurological
11 (31.5%) Muscular-Skeletal
4 (11.4%) Visual
2 (5.7%) Cardiac and Circulatory
1 (2.9%) Hearing

Secondary Disabilities

28 (80.0%) of the members of the sample had at least one additional serious disability. Among these disabilities were:

10 (28.6%) Cardiac and Circulatory
5 (14.3%) Muscular-Skeletal
4 (11.4%) Systemic
3 (8.6%) Emotional
2 (5.7%) Neurological
2 (5.7%) Visual
1 (2.9%) Hearing
1 (2.9%) Speech
7 (20.0%) None

R. Medical Experience

30 (85.7%) regularly see a private physician or one employed by a medical facility.

25 (71.4%) regularly take some medication.

S. Activity and Functioning Limitations

32 (91.5%) Walking
31 (88.6%) Stooping or Bending
29 (82.8%) Lifting
26 (74.3%) Standing
15 (42.8%) Incontinence
9 (25.7%) Need assistance in bed transfer
5 (14.3%) Confined to a wheelchair
5 (14.3%) Need help in dressing
4 (11.4%) Need help in bathing

Only 2 of the members of the group were fully ambulatory without mechanical aids or personal assistance of some type. Everyone in the sample was able to feed himself.

T. Appliances Used

19 (54.3%) Canes
5 (14.3%) Crutches
5 (14.3%) Wheelchairs
5 (14.3%) Braces
4 (11.4%) Artificial Limbs
1 (2.9%) Special Corset
1 (2.9%) Special Eyeglasses
6 (17.2%) Used no appliances at all
11 (31.5%) used more than one appliance

U. Effect of the Disability on Manual Dexterity

15 (42.8%) None
7 (20.0%) Weakness
5 (14.3%) Stiffness
4 (11.4%) One hand without useful function
2 (5.7%) Tremor
2 (5.7%) Hand fatigues easily

V. Transportation

28 (80.0%)Limited in use of bus transportation
33 (94.4%) Limited in use of Subway
33 (94.4%) Able to use an automobile if help is available in getting in and out of it
4 (11.4%) Can drive a car but currently have no access to such a vehicle.

IV. ACTIVITY VARIABLES

A. Major Activities

29 (82.8%) Watching television
23 (65.7%) Visiting with friends and family
16 (45.6%) Listening to the radio
16 (45.6%) Reading
7 (20.0%) Participating in clubs, groups, and other organizations
6 (17.2%) Sewing, knitting, and crafts
2 (5.7%) Playing cards
1 (2.9%) Reading talking books
1 (2.9%) Sculpting

B. Persons with whom these Homebound Persons interact in their activities

29 (82.8%) No one
4 (11.4%) Family members
1 (2.9%) Friends
1 (2.9%) Homemaker

C. Major morning activities

18 (51.4%) Performing industrial homework
13 (37.2%) Cooking
12 (34.4%) Cleaning
7 (20.0%) Watching television
6 (17.2%) Sitting outdoors
6 (17.2%) Reading
3 (8.6%) Sewing, knitting, and crafts

D. Major afternoon activities

24 (68.6%) Performing industrial homework
12 (34.4%) Sitting outdoors
11 (31.5%) Watching television
8 (22.8%) Cooking
6 (17.2%) Cleaning
5 (14.3%) Reading
4 (11.4%) Sewing, knitting, and crafts

E. Major evening activities

29 (82.8%) Watching television
13 (37.2%) Cooking
5 (14.3%) Cleaning
4 (11.4%) Out-of-home visiting and movies

F. Special weekend activities

12 (34.4%) Church attendance
11 (31.5%) Visiting socially out-of-home
4 (11.4%) Receiving visitors at home

G. Household activities

20 (57.2%) Do some cooking
18 (51.4%) Do some cleaning
8 (22.8%) Do some shopping

H. Financial decision-making

26 (74.4%) Make financial decisions alone or in consultation with family members
9 (25.7%) Depend on others to make financial decisions for them.

V. THE INDUSTRIAL HOMEWORK EXPERIENCE

A. Site in the Client's Home at which Homework is performed

19 (54.3%) Living room
7 (20.0%) Bedroom
3 (8.6%) Kitchen
3 (8.6%) Spare room
2 (5.7%) Several different rooms
1 (2.9%) Hospital-assigned space

B. Hours spent on Industrial Homework

4.3 hours per weekday were spent on the average by this sample on industrial homework activities

C. Duration of the Industrial Homework Experience

Average of 1.9 years

D. Number of different Industrial Homework Tasks performed during the above period

Average of 2.7 different tasks

E. Weekly earnings on Industrial Homework

Average weekly homework earnings: $28.70

F. Storage of materials in the home

6 (17.2%) report that storage of materials at home is a problem

G. Family reaction to Industrial Homework

18 (75%) of the 24 persons responding to this item - family is supportive
6 (25%) family is neutral

H. Uses made of Industrial Homework earnings

24 (68.6%) General support of self
7 (20.0%) To pay for personal purchases
4 (11.4%) To pay for special items, such as homemaker and insurance services, and for gifts to one's children

I. Major effects of layoffs from Industrial Homework
(6 clients made multiple responses)

22 (62.9%) left with nothing to do with time
13 (37.2%) loss of earnings
6 (17.2%) no real loss suffered

J. Perceived meaning of having Industrial Homework available
(9 clients gave multiple responses)

26 (74.3%) it keeps one occupied
18 (51.4%) it provides money

K. Effects of Industrial Homework on quality of family life
(Limited to 24 respondents living with their families)

12 (50.0%) helped to improve the quality of family life
10 (41.7%) no change
2 (8.3%) no response

VI. INCOMPLETE SENTENCES

A content analysis was performed on the responses provided to the project's incomplete sentences instrument by 26 respondents. The cther 9 members of the sample were unable to cope with the incomplete sentences stimuli because of language, intellectual, or emotional factors. The data are presented in terms of the categories that occurred most frequently among the responses. Because of the classification errors, the data reported below should be regarded as reflecting trends rather than statistically valid proportions. Only the dominant or most common response categories are reported.

A. Attitude toward family

69.3% positive

B. Most common wishes for oneself

Improved health and more activity.

C. Greatest worry

Health problems and financial status

D. State of mind

Almost half report feeling at ease
Almost one-third report being troubled

E. Happiest time currently

When with one's family and when working

F. Limitations

Not being able to do the physical things one wants

G. Annoyances

Health and physical problems

H. Needs

More money, more work, and more friends

I. Fears

Exacerbation of the disability and financial insecurity

1. Most difficult part of being homebound

Immobility and inactivity

J. Attitude toward the future

More than half indicated resignation
Almost 25% view the future in positive terms; almost 10% view it in negative terms.

K. Changes in life status since starting Industrial Homework

Less time on one's hands.

L. Attitude toward Industrial Homework

Almost 80% indicate that Industrial Homework is interesting or acceptable.
About 20% indicate that it is boring.

M. Family Opinions About Industrial Homework

About 75% feel that their families have a positive attitude toward homework.

N. Attitudes toward level of Homework Earnings

Almost 75% feel that homework earnings are helpful; another 25% feel that these earnings are better than nothing.

O. Changes in Personal Feelings since starting Homework

About 65% feel more useful; almost 25% feel calmer and less troubled.

P. Response to Homework Layoffs

About 50% become more nervous and depressed when layoffs occur.
25% find something else to do, and,
25% become bored and restless.

Q. What Homework does for the Individual

For 50% it primarily provides activity.
For 50% it primarily provides money.

R. Areas of Homework that need Improvement

Almost 50% would like to see changes that would result in their receiving more work; about 20% would like to see improvements made in pick-up and delivery systems.

VII. THE Q SORT

Twenty-three members of the sample were presented with a set of cards, each of which carried a statement of self-description or a self-reference. Respondents were asked to sort these cards in each of three piles: (1) "This is like me", (2) "This is somewhat like me", and (3) "This is not like me". The data reported below indicate the items on which these subjects perceived self-reference in more than 50% of the cases. Thus, the percentages noted below indicate the proportion of subjects who made the reported response in each instance.

The "like me" items exceeding 50% were:

100.0%	I like to work with my hands.
100.0%	I am respected by my family and friends.
87.2%	I need to get out more often.
87.2%	I need to work to have self-respect.
78.6%	I like to be with people.
78.6%	I am worth more money for my work than I am getting.

78.6% I need other types of homework.

74.3% I stand up for what I believe is right.

65.2% Our family is not well enough off financially to do what it wants to do.

65.2% I'm generally satisfied with the kind of homework I am given.

52.4% Things usually don't work out the way I want them to.

The "unlike me", items that is, "I am different from the statement" which were noted by more than 50% of the respondents were:

78.6% My family makes me feel I'm not good enough.

56.6% I am basically a healthy person.

The above "unlike" items reflect the feeling that the families of these respondents do make them feel that they are good enough and that the respondents generally feel that they are not healthy people.

VIII. DISCUSSION

To the extent that these and other spontaneous responses can be considered to be representative of industrial homeworkers in general, it may be possible to answer the following important questions about this rehabilitation client group:

A. What are the Characteristics of Industrial Homeworkers:

The Industrial Homeworker seems to be a multi-

handicapped person in the middle or older years whose severe limitations have a prominent neurological and/or orthopedic component. By and large, the members of the group retain substantial residual manual dexterity but are relatively limited in the mobility area. This latter limitation is, in part, determined by architectural barriers, existing transportation systems and self-perceptions. Industrial homeworkers are heterogeneous in terms of social group, marital status, place of birth, and family unit. Most are receiving some form of organized assistance in performing their home and self-care duties.

With few exceptions, industrial homeworkers are under financial pressure, with most of their income coming from Social Security payments of various types family contributions, and public assistance, However modest their income from industrial homework may be, it often makes the difference between functioning on the edges of poverty and attaining some degree of comfort and economic well-being. By and large,the unearned income of of these homeworkers provides for the essentials of living (food, shelter, and utilities). On the other hand, the earned income derived from industrial homework seems to provide for comforts and personal expression. In a way, then, such earned income may be viewed as an important source of economic control and self-direction for these homeworkers, enabling them to go financially beyond their fixed sources of income and essential obligations. In this light, homework earnings seem to influence individual life-style in the direction of greater independence.

As apartment dweller, only a fraction of these homeworkers are rendered homebound by physical barriers to the street level. Nor are their residences full of indoor deterrents. However, most of them depend on special equipment designed to solve individual

mobility and safety problems. The large majority have available to them the accepted amenities of daily living in an urban area, such as telephone, television set, radio, and tub and shower. Thus, although they have modest financial resources, these homeworkers are not deprived of essential necessities and, to some degree, comforts.

The mean educational level of the group compares favorably with that of other Americans in their age group. Beyond formal academic education, the majority of these homeworkers have had post-school career-related college or vocational training. All of them had prior community-based remunerative work experiences, most in full-time jobs in the manual and service areas. Their work histories suggest a continuity of vocational stability and effectiveness that was interrupted by the onset of severe disability and homeboundedness. As a whole, the group experienced and extended period of unemployment subsequent to becoming homebound before entering industrial homework. More than 90% recall their pre-homebound jobs as having provided them with high or moderate job satisfaction.

Homebound persons sometimes are perceived as being deprived of essential health-related services. Contrary to this view, more than 85% of the members of this sample reported having regular access to private physicians or medical facilities in the community. More than 70% currently are taking one or more medications. The physical limitations in the group are pervasive, with a high incidence of restrictions in walking stooping or bending lifting and standing. Somewhat over 40% are incontinent and more than a quarter need help in bed transfer.

Only two were fully ambulatory without some form of assistance. Canes, crutches, wheelchairs, and braces were commonly used to assist ambulation. More than half of the members of the group had limitations in manipulation, with weakness and stiffness in the hands being common sources of difficulty in this area. Subway transportation was out of the question for almost all of the members of the group with the use of buses being limited in 80% of thecases. On the other hand, the members of the group seemed to experience far less difficulty in gaining physical access to automobiles whenever this form of transportation became available to them.

B. How does the Industrial Homeworker use his time?

For most of these industrial homeworkers, their work tasks constituted a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, other activities. At best, homework required the use of only a part of a homeworker's time owing to the limited supply of available work, the relatively limited work tolerance of many homebound persons, and the life style of these individuals. This life style seems built upon a balance between daytime work and daytime leisure activities with comparable time available for each. Thus, in the weekday time period-9:00A.M. to 5:00P.M., the typical industrial homeworker appears to spend about 4 hours at work and about 4 hours in nonremunerative activities. Economic press imposes a need on the part of these homebound persons for more work but this might not be their universal preference under more favorable financial circumstances. A cherished television program still takes precedence over homework in some households. As far as nonvocational activities are concerned, watching television, visiting with friends and family, listening to the radio, and reading appear to dominate the

daytime leisure hours of the industrial homework group. About half of them manage to get some homework performed in the morning hours, but this proportion rises to more than two-thirds during the afternoon period Virtually no industrial homework is performed during the evening, a time when TV watching dominates life activities even more markedly. Among the women of the group (and some of the men as well), household tasks are important during both daytime and evening hours. As a group, industrial homeworkers engage in relatively few organized community activities. The little socialization that is reported occurs informally in the company of family members and a few friends. In more than 80% of the reported instances, industrial homeworkers participate in activities on a solitary basis. Weekend activities are comparable to weekday ones with the exception of church attendance and stepped-up social visiting. A majority of industrial homeworkers participate in homemaking activities, particularly cooking and house cleaning. However, fewer than 25% do their own shopping. About 75% of them report having major roles in making household financial decisions.

In essence, with the exception of their participation in homework and their avoidance of social activities requiring high levels of mobility, industrial homeworkers use their time in ways that do not differ substantially from their neighbors. Although they are limited in shopping, social visiting, and out-of-home entertainment, so are many non-disabled persons in similar social and economic circumstances. As in the case of their neighbors, television (and to a lesser extent, radio and reading) is the homebound person's window on the world. Commonly, their morning and afternoon periods are distributed between work, household chores, and TV viewing with many alternating among these activities to break up the

monotony of the day and insuring a more varied schedule. Contrary to some opinion, the lives of these industrial homeworkers do not appear to be any more drab or monotonous than the lives of many of their non-disabled contemporaries.

C. What is the Nature of the Industrial Homeworker's Job Experience?

A majority of these industrial homeworkers perform their work assignment in the living rooms of their residences. At time of study, the members of the sample had spent a mean of 1.9 years in homework employment. However, this should be viewed as a function of the process through which they were selected for the participation in the Study. Since the project is confined to "recent" entrants into the homework experience, the sampling process excluded other industrial homeworkers, some of whom have spent up to 20 years in the Federation of the Handicapped Program. If one can judge from the number of different work tasks assigned to sample members (a mean of 2.7), it may be concluded that variety of work is not a hallmark of the industrial homework experience.

A few industrial homeworkers actually equal or exceed the statutory minimum wage over a period of 30 or more hours a week. Although they receive an hourly rate that is comparable to that in industry for the same type of work, most of them actually produce fewer items per hour and work fewer hours per week, resulting in modest income levels. A few industrial homeworkers in this sample were essentially self-supporting; on the other hand, most reported earnings that, at best, could be considered supplementary to other sources of support. The mean weekly earnings on the Program for the Project Sample was $28.70. However, it is important to note that

even those with the most modest earnings were also receiving fringe benefits. In some cases, this included credits toward Social Security eligibility and enhanced benefits.

Fewer than 20% of the members of this sample reported that the storage of raw materials and finished products in the home constitutes a problem for them. Related to this, perhaps, is the finding that 75% of the families appear to support the homebound individual's participation in the Program. None of the families was reported as being opposed to the homework employment. Although more than two-thirds of these homeworkers use their earnings for self-support, others apply this income to the purchase of personal items and special services.

From time to time, the drying up of available work necessitates a temporary discontinuance of the industrial homework experience for periods ranging from a week or so to several months at a time. Almost two-thirds of the respondents noted that when this occurs it is a serious matter in that it leaves them with "nothing to do". Almost 40% noted that a loss of income constituted the major consequence of such layoffs. The major meaning of industrial homework to these homebound respondents appears to be keeping oneself busy and in earning money. These two factors are so closely inter-related that it is difficult to consider them in isolation. Apparently, both make the homework experience worthwhile.

D. Some Psychosocial Aspects of the Industrial Homework Experience

Health and inactivity are both major concerns for many of these industrial homeworkers. They are troubled not only by their failure to improve their health status, but, even more significantly, by their fear that they will not retain even their current limited physical capacities in the years to come. This fear seems related to whether in the future they will be able to continue as industrial homeworkers. Whatever worries they have, such worries are least on their minds when they are with their families or when performing industrial homework tasks. In a nutshell apart from improved health, they have three central desires: more money, more work, and more friends As they look to the future, the most threatening clouds on the horizon appear to be an exacerbation of their disabilities and financial distress. As they see it, the paramount negative sequelae of homeboundedness are immobility and inactivity. About half are resigned to a future in which no substantial improvements in their status can be expected. Only one-quarter view the future in more positive terms.

Economic and social benefits notwithstanding, most of the members of this sample felt that the major benefit attained from industrial homework was in filling their empty hours. Among those who expressed an opinion, the proportion who say industrial homework as interesting or acceptable was four-to-one over those who find homework boring.

Although homework earnings are welcome, there is an undercurrent of feeling that such earnings are inadequate and/or inequitable. Despite the disadvantages inherent in industrial homework--encroachment upon living space, repetitive tasks, low

earnings, and instability in the flow of work--the members of this sample generally reacted favorably to the program and about three-fourths reported that their families also had positive attitudes toward the homework experience. As a consequence of participating in industrial homework, about two-fifths report feeling more useful and another one-fourth report feeling calmer and less troubled. When lay-offs occur resulting in a temporary disengagement from work activities, about half of these homebound persons report becoming more nervous and depressed than usual.

E. Self-Perceptions

Although differences exist among the members of the group, there is a tendency for these industrial homeworkers to see themselves as:

...having serious health problems
...being accepted and respected by their families and friends
...enjoying work with with their hands
...needing to get out of the home more frequently
...needing work to maintain self-respect
...enjoying being with people
...working at a level that merits higher remuneration
...needing greater variety and challenge in their work
...having benefitted from the industrial experience
...generally satisfied with the industrial experience

IX. CONCLUSIONS

1. Impact of Industrial Homework

Insofar as these data indicate, industrial homework has had an important impact upon the lives of these homeworkers. This impact transcends the increments reported in income and the more constructive use of time. Indeed one's life style, activities relationships with others, and self-perceptions all seem to be influenced by an industrial homework experience. Although the degree of impact varies from individual to individual, the changes that occur as a consequence of participating in homework are invariably favorable.

2. Life Style

Except for working at homework tasks and spending their leisure at home, the life style of these homeworkers resembles that of others in the community in the same age and social group. Thus, as in the case of their friends and neighbors, their major out-of-neighborhood contacts occur through television, radio, and newspapers, their major sources of entertainment are television, reading, and social visiting, their central pre-occupations are with health and family problems, and their fears are rooted in an uncertain future. Like many others in our society, they are troubled by the fact that large segments of their lives seem to lie outside their personal control. A feeling probably accentuated by the realities of their physical and emotional dependence.

3. The Meaning of Homework

Idleness and inactivity are the twin spectres that haunt these industrial homeworkers. As vocationally-motivated individuals, they are helped

only partially by organized recreation services. Developing new ways of filling unoccupied time for them is not merely a matter of participating in new recreational activities. On the contrary, they need some remunerative vocational involvement that not only augments income but which endows them with the social status and self-regard accorded to employed individuals in our society. Constituting, perhaps, a smallish vocationally-oriented minority group among the homebound, industrial homeworkers need employment more crucially than other homebound people.

4. Coping Mechanisms

Being homebound is a frustrating and exasperating experience for most Americans. Continuing pain, recurrent health problems, advancing disability, poverty, social exclusion, and interpersonal isolation contribute substantially to the deprivation suffered by this group. Yet, the majority of these industrial homeworkers appear to be in reasonably good mental health and are adapting fairly well to the problems that confront them daily. Their responses as reported in this Study suggest that industrial homework plays some part, perhaps a substantial one in some instances, in sustaining them emotionally, in the homebound experience.

5. Alterations in the Industrial Homework Experience

Specific additional frustrations caused by shortcomings in the industrial homework situation, however, do add mental health hazards to the life of the homebound person. Fortunately, such conditions are not immutable. Features of the industrial homework program such as the unevenness of work the repetitiveness and unevenness of the work tasks,

faulty scheduling of pick-ups and deliveries, and the modest earnings can all be altered. The engineering of changes in these program features is vital to the enhancement of satisfaction on the part of the industrial homeworker. As industrial homework conditions are improved, unnecessary deterrents to growth and satisfaction will be removed.

6. Industrial Homework as a Rehabilitation Alternative

This Study sheds no light on the comparative advantages of residence-based industrial homework and other in-and-out-of-home employment alternatives for homebound persons. It is a general rehabilitation rule that placement outside the home is almost invariable superior to home employment, a position supported by logic, research, and experience However, if the choice is between no work and homework for the homebound person, homework is an obvious preference, if:

- . . . the homebound person is vocationally oriented
- . . . concurrent needs for income and useful activity are prominent in the individual's motivational system
- . . . home and family conditions favor this option
- . . . the homework can be made part of a total rehabilitation plan
- . . . the person can endure the frustrations and annoyances that usually mark participation in an industrial homework program
- . . . homework is an acceptable means for the homebound person to implement his self-concept

In view of the tens of thousands of idle and unserved homebound persons, who could benefit from industrial homework, the current need is for infinitely more industrial homework opportunities.

This Study suggests that such opportunities will concurrently generate positive changes in homebound persons' attitudes, behavior, and life style and in the manner in which the non-disabled perceive them.

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